



Greg Gianforte
Congress of the United States

Montana
November 16, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

As Congress wraps up our work in the remaining weeks of the 115th Congress, I urge you to include several critical Montana priorities in any public lands package. These significant pieces of legislation, all of which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources, are of great importance to my constituents of Montana.

I ask for the inclusion of H.R. 4644, the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act. This locally-supported, bipartisan legislation will permanently withdraw the mineral rights to 30,000 acres of public land surrounding the gateway to Yellowstone National Park. This bill, which enjoys broad local support, uses a collaborative approach to protect the community and promote its growing tourism industry. On September 26, 2018, H.R. 4644 passed the House Committee on Natural Resources, while companion legislation, S. 941, has advanced to a similar position in the Senate.

I also urge our leaders to address significant funding challenges regarding our public lands. I would like to see a permanent reauthorization of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF program has had a substantial impact in Montana, from allowing ranchers to pass on operations to the next generation to clearing up checkerboard management across the state. Permanently reauthorizing LWCF will allow for more access opportunities on our public lands for generations to come.

Montana is home to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, two of the most iconic national parks in the United States. The significant maintenance backlog impedes the experience of our

visitors and stresses the infrastructure of our surrounding gateway communities. Any public lands package should address the \$11.6 billion maintenance backlog with robust and dedicated funding. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 6510, the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act, which provides immediate relief for our national parks system.

Additionally, too many Montanans still lack reliable access to clean water in their communities. The Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs Water Project Streamlining Act, H.R. 4419, will accelerate studies and provide greater accountability in Reclamation's process to study the feasibility of new or expanded surface water storage. Most importantly, the legislation will authorize the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System, bringing clean reliable water to over 4,500 Montanans. S. 685, the Clean Water for Rural Communities Act, also authorizes projects that would have an immediate impact on Montana's rural water needs.

Finally, with wildfires raging in California, it is important that any public lands package is paired with meaningful forestry reforms, like H.R. 2936, the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

Protecting the gateway to Yellowstone, permanently reauthorizing LWCF, resolving the maintenance backlog in our national parks, providing clean water throughout Montana, and reforming how our forests are managed are key priorities for Montanans, and I urge you to include these measures in any public lands package.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress